

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 PRS-01

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:MWCOTTER:LAS

APPROVED BY ARA/WGBOWDLER

ARA/CEN:LPEZZULLO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 240858

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GOES AMBASSADOR BERTRAND

SUMMARY: GOES AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CALLED ON DEPTOFFS
DECEMBER 7 IN FOLLOW UP TO DEC 5 CALL BY GOH FONMIN
BATRES. AMB. BERTRAND INQUIRED ABOUT REASONS
FOR BATRES VISIT. HE SAID ONLY TWO SMALL BORDER AREAS
STILL IN DISPUTE BUT GOES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ARBITRATE
EVEN WITH REGARD TO THEM. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
BOWDLER REPEATED THE SUGGESION MADE TO BATRES THAT A
JOINT DECLARATION BE ISSUED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 15.
BERTRAND APPEARED SKEPTICAL BUT PROMISED TO CONSULT WITH
HIS GOVERNMENT ON PROPOSAL. BERTRAND ALSO EMPHASIZED
IMPORTANCE OF MORE FORMAL CONTACT WITH GOH. HE SAID HE
HAS ESTABLISHED CONTACT WITH GOH AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON
AND THAT GOES WILL PROPOSE RENEWAL OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
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DURING FINAL MEXICO SESSION. END SUMMARY.

1. AMB. BERTRAND REQUESTED CALL ON DEPT. ASST. SECRETARY BOWDLER ON DEC 5, NOTING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD HONDURAN FONMIN BATRES HAD PAID A CALL ON THE DEPARTMENT. DURING CALL ON BOWDLER DEC 7 BERTRAND OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS BATRES CALLED ON U.S. INDUSTRIES, SPECIFICALLY STANDARD FRUIT, WITH DEMANDS FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR. BOWDLER REPLIED

THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS UNAWARE OF OTHER CONTACTS MADE BY BATRES DURING STAY IN WASHINGTON. WE VIEWED BATRES VISIT, LIKE THAT OF ORTIZ MANCIA, AS EFFORT TO EXPLAIN HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. BERTRAND SEEMED TO ACCEPT THIS EXPLANATION AND SAID THAT IT WOULD "RELIEVE HIS GOVERNMENT." (STANDARD FRUIT REP BURROWS SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED US HE HAD NOT SEEN BATRES ON DEC 5.)

2. WITH REGARD TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, BERTRAND SAID THAT THE GOES WOULD LIKE TO POSTPONE THE TALKS UNTIL AFTER THE MARCH ELECTIONS. HE RECOGNIZED HOWEVER THAT HONDURAS HAS PROBLEMS WITH THAT SUGGESTION. HE SAID HONDURAS PRESENTS TWO OPTIONS: EITHER AGREEMENT ON EVERYTHING EXCEPT INSOLUBLE BORDER AREAS WHICH WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO ARBITRATION; OR NO AGREEMENT OF ANY KIND UNTIL ALL QUESTIONS ARE AGREED UPON. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, BERTRAND CONFIRMED THAT THE 1972 ANTIGUA NEGOTIATIONS HAD NARROWED THE DISPUTED BORDER AREAS SUBSTANTIALLY BUT THAT EL SALVADOR DID NOT CONSIDER THAT BINDING. HE SAID TWO AREAS ARE STILL BASICALLY IN DISPUTE; ZAZALAPA AND MONTECA. EL SALVADOR WOULD BE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT IN THOSE AREAS (I.E., CEDE THEM TO HONDURAS) IN EXCHANGE FOR A CONCESSION BY HONDURAS IN THE AREA WHICH WILL BE INUNDATED BY THE CERRON GRANDE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT.

3. HE ADDED THAT THE MEXICO FORMAT HAD NOT BEEN CONDUCTIVE TO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. A MEXICAN IS ALWAYS PRESENT AND ALL SESSIONS ARE RECORDED, THUS FORCING THE NEGOTIATORS WHO ARE CONSCIOUS THAT THEY ARE SPEAKING FOR THE RECORD

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TO BE MORE CIRCUMSPECT THAN MIGHT BE THE CASE IN LESS FORMAL PROCEEDINGS.

4. BOWDLER NOTED THE RELATIVE UNIMPORTANCE OF THE BORDER AREAS STILL IN DISPUTE IN RELATION TO THE LONGER-RANGE BENEFIT TO EL SALVADOR OF A SETTLEMENT. BOWDLER ASKED WHETHER EL SALVADOR WOULD BE OPPOSED TO ARBITRATION OF THOSE SMALL AREAS STILL DISPUTED. BERTRAND SAID THAT HE

FAVORS AN ARBITRATED SETTLEMENT, AS DOES FONMIN BORGONOVO. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE AND BORGONOVO HAD "RUN INTO A STONE" WALL WHEN DISCUSSING ARBITRATION WITHIN THE GOES. HE SAID THAT SALVADORAN OPINION AT ALL LEVELS AND AMONG ALL CLASSES HAS NOT BEEN CONDITIONED TO ACCEPT THE POSSIBILITY OF ARBITRATION. BERTRAND RECOGNIZED THAT, SHOULD MEXICAN TALKS END ON NEGATIVE NOTE, HARDLINERS IN SALVADOREAN MILITARY WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE POLITICALLY TO RENEW NEGOTIATIONS IN NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

5. IN AN EFFORT TO SEEK SOME MECHANISM TO AVOID BREAKDOWN SUGGESTION MADE TO BATRES THAT A JOINT DECLARATION BE ISSUED ON OR BEFORE THAT DATE ANNOUNCING THAT PARTIES HAD ACHIEVED AGREEMENT ON A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF BORDER AND THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO RESOLVE THE REMAINING AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT. BOWDLER SAID HE HAD PROPOSED THIS IDEA TO BATRES, AS WELL. BERTRAND SAID A DECLARATION ANNOUNCING AGREEMENT ON MOST OF THE "AGENDA" MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT THAT ONE REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO PROGRESS ON THE BORDER ISSUE WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOES TO ACCEPT. HE PROMISED HOWEVER TO REPORT ON SUGGESTION TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

6. BERTRAND SAID IF NOTHING ELSE WAS ACHIEVED IN MEXICO THE TWO COUNTRIES PERHAPS COULD RENEW DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE SAID DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A LESSENING OF TENSION AND PROVIDE AN ALL-IMPORTANT PERMANENT CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE SAID THE SALVADORAN DELEGATION WOULD MAKE SUCH A PROPOSAL DURING THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING SESSION.

7. THE EMPHASIS BERTRAND PUTS ON CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS ALSO UNDERLINED DURING A SHORT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONVERSATION WITH CEN OFFICERS PRIOR TO CALL ON BOWDLER. HE SAID HE HAS ESTABLISHED A WORKING ARRANGEMENT WITH HONDURAN AMBASSADOR GALVEZ. HIS CONTACT WITH GALVEZ IS ALREADY BEARING FRUIT. BATRES PASSED A MESSAGE THROUGH THE TWO AMBASSADORS INVITING BORGONOVO TO MEET WITH HIM INFORMALLY IN MEXICO THIS COMING SUNDAY, OUTSIDE THE FORMAL NEGOTIATING SESSIONS. BORGONOVO REFUSED ON THE GROUNDS THAT HE IS NOT INVOLVED INTIMATELY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, SUGGESTING INSTEAD THAT BATRES MEET WITH GALINDO POHL. BORGONOVO THOUGHT THAT BATRES WOULD OBJECT TO MEETING WITH BOTH HIM AND GALINDO POHL. BATRES, HOWEVER, IS AGREEABLE. BERTRAND SO INFORMED BORGONOVO AND IS AWAITING A REPLY.

8. COMMENT: BERTRAND WAS NOT ENTHUSED BY THE JOINT

DECLARATION IDEA, ESPECIALLY ONE CONTAINING A REFERENCE
TO THE BORDER. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE GOES DESIRE TO CONTINUE
BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS, GOES MAY FIND IT MORE ATTRACTIVE
AS THEY CONSIDER BENEFICIAL ASPECTS. POSSIBLY BATRES
WANTS TO FLOAT THE JOINT DECLARATION FORMULA IN
INFORMAL SESSION WITH BORGONOVO AND GALINDO POHL. RUSH

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